1: Freeman E-5 (1949-1951)1955 OC6 Iban OC6

and the width of the wall facing on to the *ruai* is some indication of the general social standing of the family that owns it. In Rumah Nyala, of the Sungai Sut, the smallest *bilek* was 12ft. 6ins. wide by 16ft. deep, while the largest was 22ft. wide by 17ft. 6ins. deep.

(*b*) The *sadau*. Above each *bilek*, and jutting out over the *ruai*, is the *sadau*, which is a kind of garret or loft. Here, in immense bark bins, is stored the grain (*padi*) grown by the members of the family. Also kept in the *sadau* are the various implements used in farming, and the mats, baskets and trays used when *padi* is being husked and winnowed.

(*c*) The *ruai*. The door of each family *bilek* opens on to another section of the apartment known as the *ruai*, and which—like the *bilek*—is the private property of the family to which it belongs. The *ruai* serves many purposes. Immediately adjacent to the wall dividing the *bilek* from the *ruai* is a section about three to four feet in width, known as the *tempuan lesong*. Here stands the *lesong*, a large wooden mortar, in which the women of the family pound their *padi* with long, hardwood poles, so to husk it. Adjoining this narrow strip comes another section, usually about 10 to 12 feet in width, and completely unobstructed by posts or partitions; it thus forms a corridor or gallery giving access to all parts of the long-house. It is, in fact, a kind of village street, and is used by all the members of the community as a general thoroughfare. Flanking this corridor or 'street' are the *padong ruai*, open, rectangular spaces, one of which belongs to each family apartment. These *padong ruai* are the main centres of community life and social intercourse. Like the *bilek*, of which it is an extension, each section of the *ruai* (composed of the three divisions just described) is owned by a single family. It is the duty of each family to keep its section of the corridor in good repair so that all may use it. But this general use involves no diminution of ownership rights; each family retains the right to cordon off its section of the *ruai* during the performance of certain rituals, and on other occasions to insist (on the pain of fine) that prohibitions governing its use be fully observed by all members of the long-house community. The boundaries of each family section of the *ruai* are clearly marked by the main supporting posts of the long-house structure.

(*d*) The *tanju*. Beyond the *ruai*, and so not covered by any form of roof, is the *tanju*, an open platform, usually about 20 to 25 feet wide. As with the corridor of the *ruai*, all the independently owned section of the *tanju* are joined to form an unbroken, raised platform, which fronts the whole long-house. The *tanju* is used for a wide variety of domestic tasks; in particular it is the place where *padi* is sunned prior to pounding.

4. It is the joining together of a number of different family apartments (each made up of a *bilek*, a *sadau*, a *ruai* and a *tanju*) that produces the attenuated structure known as a long-house. A long-house community is thus, in essence, a village consisting of a single 'street' of attached apartments. It is most important to realize, however, that each apartment is the private property of one family. Figure 2 depicts a typical Iban long-house, in this case, of ten family apartments. Let us now examine more closely the various family units of which a long-house community is composed, for these are the basic corporate groups of Iban social and economic life.

The Iban Bilek Family

5. In Government and other publications the family apartments of an Iban long-house are commonly referred to as 'doors.' A long-house, that is, is usually

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winnowed and stored. On one occasion however, I observed a woman deliberately putting poorly formed panicles into her seed basket. She said that she was doing this because she had pity on such small and imperfect *padi* plants ("*sayau ka leka mit*"), and wanted to give them another chance—a good example this of the highly personal feelings which the Iban have about their *padi*.

114. All Iban take the greatest interest in new or uncommon varieties of *padi*, and I encountered a number of cases of men having collected seed on their travels (*bejalai*). Majau, a man of Rumah Nyala, lost his *padi pun* when his *dampa* was destroyed by fire; on a subsequent journey to the Ulu Rejang he managed to procure seed from a Kayan family, and this, after appropriate rituals, became his new *padi pun*. Kubu, another man of Rumah Nyala, went in 1948 on a trading expedition to the Penihing people of the Upper Mahakam River. He returned to Sarawak with small quantities of three different kinds of *padi* seed, having purchased two of them, and purloined the third. In 1949 all of this seed was planted and the resulting crop stored away so that larger areas could be sown in 1950. The purloined variety, of which Kubu was more than proud, had exceptional characteristics: the length of the rachis was about 14 inches, with some 27 branches, carrying between 530 and 560 grains. This inter-change of *padi* seed, both sanctioned and unsanctioned, among the hill tribes of Borneo shows every sign of being a long-established custom.

115. After the harvest each variety of seed is stored in a separate container. These containers are made either from plaited cane, or from strips of bark sewn securely together; their most important feature is a lid that fits tightly enough to protect the seed from mice and rats. When filled—they vary in capacity from about two to ten gallons—they are stacked away in the loft (*sadau*), or around the walls of the *bilek* until the time for sowing returns. Although men take an active part in the rituals associated with sowing, it is rare to find a man with an accurate knowledge of all the varieties of seed owned by his *bilek* family. This is essentially the woman's province, and whenever I began to record the names, and other details of *padi* seed, the man of the family, hopelessly out of his depth, would hurriedly summon his wife, or some other woman of the family to enlighten me.

116. Iban families always store away considerably more seed than they are likely to require at the next sowing. My investigations showed that after the harvest a family of average size (i.e. 5-6 members) had seed holdings amounting to from 50 to 60 gallons, or approximately double their probable requirements at the next sowing. On May 20th, 1950, for example, the *bilek* family of Kubu, with six members, held the seed of 18 different strains of *padi*, the quantities varying from 1¼ to 5 gallons, and totalling 57 gallons. Not much more than about half of the seed of each strain is sown, and the residue is stored away again lest any section of the farm fail or be destroyed. After the harvest however the old seed is consumed, and replaced by grain from the new crop.

Catch-Crops

117. A special feature of Iban agriculture is the cultivation of a wide range of catch-crops, interspersed on the same land as the *padi*. A few, such as *ensabi* (a kind of mustard plant, the leaves of which are eaten), are sown separately, immediately after the burn. Others are planted simultaneously with the *padi*, their seeds being mixed up in the same sowing basket as the *padi*, and sown into the same dibble-holes. The most important of these are:

(*a*) *buah rampo:* cucumber;

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to its future home—the place where it is to be stored. The first man bearing a *lanji*, is greeted at the top of the entry ladder by a woman clad in an ikat skirt (a gesture this in honour of the *padi*), and bearing a fresh egg and a bowl of *tuak* (rice beer). The egg is waved over the man and his *lanji* of *padi* in consecration and welcome. (Normally a fowl is used, but in this case the use of a fowl is interdicted, as its power of flight is symbolical of the possible 'flight' of the *padi* spirits, in response to the persistent invitations of other *bilek* families). *Tuak* is offered, a libation poured, and then the *padi* is carried onto the *ruai* of the *bilek* family concerned. On the *ruai* an offering (*piring*) is performed, and after the *lanji* have been emptied onto a large mat (*bidai*), the *piring* is placed amid the golden panicles, and a prayer is said in which the *padi* is welcomed to its home and entreated to miraculously increase quantity. To conclude, a brass gong is placed over the *piring*, and together with the *padi* it is securely enfolded in the *bidai*. *Bidai*, a type of mat especially designed for handling *padi*, are woven, by men, on an upright loom from split *rotan* canes and strips of bark-cloth. They are thus extremely strong and yet very flexible. A *bidai* of average size measures about 12 ft. by 15 ft.; *padi* is enfolded within it, and the over-lapping ends of the *bidai* are then weighed down with small logs of wood. By this method the panicles are completely protected from rats and other animals, and at the same time the *bidai* can be very easily opened up to add more *padi*.

148. The ritual (*ngalu ka padi*) just mentioned is an important one is the estimation of the Iban, for they are persuaded that *padi* can miraculously increase or decrease in quantity after it has been reaped, just as it can in the fields. The operative belief here is that the *padi* has a spirit, and that the departure of this spirit may result in diminution of grain itself. This belief is sustained by the *padi* cult in general, by myths and by dreams, but the Iban do point to the fact that after threshing and winnowing, the *padi* (i.e. originally stored in panicle form) of different *bilek* families behaves in very different ways. Whereas in some cases there is a normal and expected decrease in quantity, in other cases the loss is much more marked. This, of course, does happen, for the *padi* of different farms is subjected to very diverse conditions, and widely varying degrees of infestation by insect pests; but this is not the explanation of the Iban. Their theory is a mystical one, and consequently they expend much time and trouble in pouring libations, presenting offerings and in casting magical potions over the panicles before they are enfolded in a *bidai*, which has been ritually fed (*nyape*) to ensure that it will not devour any of the *padi* it is designed to protect.

Threshing

149. The threshing (*tungko*, v.f. *nungko*) of the *padi* begins on the day following the *ngalu ka padi* ritual, or at any time thereafter which meets the convenience of the *bilek* family concerned. It normally takes place on the *ruai*, and both men and women participate. The *bidai* containing the panicles is opened out and surrounded with additional mats to avert any danger of grain falling beneath the house. To the low rafters of the *sadau* (loft), long strips of supple bark-cloth are tied. A man then takes a small stack of *padi* (usually about a bushel or so) from the main heap, and grasping a loose bark-cloth strap in each hand to gain support and purchase, he commences to tread the panicles (*tangkai*). The action is a vigorous one, the outer panicles being forced down on to the mat and kneaded with the bare soles of the feet. Then they are gathered up again with the instep and inner surface of the foot and ankle, to be trampled once more. In this

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necessary safeguards against injurious and alien influences, and in winning the esteem of the *padi* spirits by the proper rituals. It is an occasion hedged around by numerous prohibitions (*pemali*). The *ruai* is cordoned off, and while the *padi* is being handled no outsider may intervene, nor may the participants converse with one another. Offerings are meticulously made, and placed both in the main bin (*tibang*) and beside the stack of *padi* lying in its protective mat on the *ruai*. With great care the bin is fumigated, rubbed with fragrant bark and creepers,[1] anointed with fluid in which innumerable magical charms have been immersed,[2] and 'fed' with rice and *tuak* to ensure that its spirit will not molest that of the *padi*. Beside the *bidai* a dozen or more baskets (*baka*) are laid out. Then, after a final prayer of consecration, the actual handling of the *padi* begins.

159. Kneeling before the stack of grain on the *ruai* the woman in charge gently scoops it into a winnowing tray (*chapan*) with her cupped hands. The action is slow and studied, and the woman has the air of a votary handling some sacred and precious substance. This, of course, is a vital element in the ritual; the *padi* must be coaxed and charmed, and conducted to its abode with all the decorum and respect which it deserves. From the winnowing tray the *padi* is deftly poured into the waiting baskets (all of which have been 'fed' in advance), and when all are full, they are lifted up one by one to the loft (*sadau*), and tipped into the bin. At intervals two of the men pack the *padi* tightly into place by treading it down with a queer, dance-like step—shuffle, shuffle, jump—beginning at the periphery of the bin and following a spiral track until they arrive at its centre. The baskets are handed down again, and so the task continues until all of the *padi* is safely stored away. Because of the elaborate ritual, storing is a slow process, but even so, it seldom lasts for more than about half a day. The average rate of storing is about ten to twelve bushels per hour.

160. Not until all of their *padi* has been stored away are the members of a *bilek* family able to reckon with confidence the extent to which the crop is likely to meet their requirements of the coming year. A count is made of the number of baskets of *padi* (taking each as a *pasu*, or bushel) hoisted up to the loft, but the best check is had when the state of the bins is known. The same bark-bins are used year after year, and a family soon comes to know what the state of its bins means in terms of yearly consumption. (A large bin measures about 5 ft. in diameter by 3 ft. in depth; most families have one or two of these, and a number of smaller bins). Growing *padi* on hill-side clearings in the jungle is an uncertain venture; in good years there are bumper crops and grain in abundance, but the Iban are no strangers to failure and scarcity. The yearly storing always has an atmosphere of suspense about it. When the results are known, those with a deficit bemoan their lot and begin reckoning how soon it will be that they will have to set about purchasing *padi* from their kin or Chinese traders; while those with a surplus talk jubilantly of the jars, the gongs, and the other property that they will be able to buy.

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[1] As this action is performed the following *sampi* is uttered:

"Oh bark-bin, with these fragrant roots we rub you, with this oil we anoint you, with this soap we cleanse you; to rid you of all things improper, of all things defective.
Oh let all things evil and untoward, flee from hence and be utterly gone!"

[2] The accompanying *sampi* is:

"To accompany the storing away of our *padi*, we use these charms that make return and comfort certain;
Oh bark-bin, may you become full to overflowing.
Within you may our *padi* procreate and become plenteous".

3: Low G-5 (1844 1847) 1848
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cestors; and then they find that the trees, which have, during that time, covered the ground, to the destruction of the deleterious lalang grass and other weeds, are easily felled, and the ground prepared; though, as has been before noticed, the crops from such land are not so abundant as those from the 'utan tuah,' or old forest, which in consequence is, notwithstanding the greater proportionate amount of labour requisite to bring it under cultivation, always, when procurable, preferred.

It will be seen from the above statement that the farms of the Dyaks are prepared towards the end of the dry season, so that they have the wet monsoon to bring the padi to maturity, and the beginning of the following fine weather, April and May, to ripen the grain. Some tribes have a succession of farms coming in a few weeks later than each other, but never more than three. The hill Dyaks seldom plant their farms till a month or two later than the sea tribes, who consequently have the first of the market; new rice always selling for a higher price than the old, the former being esteemed sweeter and more nourishing by the Malays, who are the purchasers.

From the mode of pounding the padi in mortars, to free it from the husk, adopted by the Dyaks and Malays, none of the rice, the produce of the island, can be kept for any length of time: the grains being broken, and the enamel which protects them from the wevil being destroyed, that insect soon takes advantage of the circumstance to attack and destroy it; in the

3: Low G-5 (1844-1847) 1848
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husk, or padi state, it may be kept for years without injury, and is in this respect supposed to be equal to the production of India or America. 251

Besides the farms above described, the Dyaks have small gardens, usually the property of women, in which they plant vegetables of different kinds, principally the 'trong,' brenjal of the East, and egg-plant of Europe, sugar-cane, plantains, yams, sweet potatoes, chilies, &c. A few plants of tobacco are generally found in their farms, the leaves of which they prepare by drying for their own use. Sisawi, a kind of mustard, and a species of millet, are also planted amongst the padi in small quantities. The sugar-cane, which grows very freely, is only esteemed for its saccharine juice, which they extract like the Malays, by chewing. Of the plantains they have several fine varieties; that most esteemed is the 'pisang amas,' or golden plantain; its fruit is small and not angular, the bunch is, however, uncommonly large—it is of a rich golden yellow colour, and much finer flavour than most of the other kinds. The 'pisang merah,' or red plantain, called 'pisang udang,' or prawn plantain, by the Malays, and 'pisang baddat,' are the next in esteem, and resemble each other, except in colour, which in the former is red, in the latter yellow, with green ends; many others are very fine, but as the varieties are so numerous it is unnecessary to particularize them: the 'pisang tandok,' or horn plantain, bears fruit of from twelve to eighteen inches in length, and is a well- 244 [249] 245

4: Roth E-4 (no date) 1891 OC6 Iban OC6

few minutes in the sun before putting on their *chawats* (loin-cloths).

Their next duty is to prepare the morning meal. They eat with the men or not as they please, but they generally prefer to feed with the children after the men have finished. When breakfast is all over they clean up the crockery and brush the floor. The pigs and poultry are fed with the refuse, as are also the dogs.

They are now ready to accompany the men to the farm, or if not required they pursue their own occupations, which are various and manifold. As it is necessary to provide vegetables for the next meal, they visit their gardens for this purpose and bring home with them whatever they may be able to find in them, viz.:—cucumbers, pumpkins, melons, capsicums, &c. Tapioca leaves, cucumber leaves, and sweet-potato leaves are used by them as much as anything else, and they are fond of them when boiled in water.

Sometimes they go out fishing with scoop nets when they have the time to spare, or are desirous of a change of diet. It is the business of the men to provide pork, venison, and fresh fish, but the preserving is done by the women, who smoke or pickle according to fancy. There is never a want of firewood in a Dyak house; one of the first duties of a husband is to provide this, or he gets into bad odour with his wife or mother-in-law. The wood is smoked until every particle of moisture is evaporated out, and it becomes quite brittle and hard. If the women go out in the forenoon upon expeditions of the above kind, they have to be back again by the middle of the day to cook the mid-day meal. If they are busy on the farm, and mean to make a day of it with the family, they take what rice they require with them early in the morning and cook it on the spot to avoid the journey to and fro.

At two o'clock in the afternoon they pound a measure of paddy with heavy wooden pestles to free it from the husk; each woman is provided with a wooden mortar which is placed either in the *tempuan* or thoroughfare, or inside the *bilich* or room, and two women pound away at each. At 4 p.m. they bathe, and at 5 p.m. they are busy cooking for the third and last meal of the day. After the things are cleared away they hang up the mosquito curtains, and put the children to bed, while they sit up for an hour or two to converse with the men, and retire to rest when tired.

In addition to the above routine of daily labour, they have a variety of things to do, and are never idle. They have to fetch drinking water and to nurse the babies, and when they are tired of carrying them about in their arms, they strap them on to their back with A cloth.

5: Roth-E-4 (no date) 1892 OC6 Iban OC6

462 into the far interior, or plunge into the jungle in quest of its produce.

243 As a rule the women have to do all the weeding (*mantun*) by
137 themselves; this is a very laborious task, as the weeds grow so
177 rapidly as to threaten to choke the paddy unless promptly removed. Another grievance is the grass, originally called *rumput teku*, but since nicknamed *rumput blanda*, and which they declare was introduced by the whites to feed their cattle on. It is now a proverbial saying with them that it is impossible to get rid of this grass, likewise is it unprofitable to shake off the rule of the white man.

243 As the paddy begins to ripen, the men return to their homes
784 and the families remove entirely to their farms, where there is plenty to do to scare away the birds and other pests and to prepare for the harvest. The paths intersecting the farm are
[688] closed at this season, and no one can traverse them without paying a penalty or sin-offering of a fowl and a bit of iron. Those who may be suffering from positive want, having exhausted their last year's stock, now glean of the half ripe paddy as much as they require for their immediate necessities; this is called *ñumbar*.

243 But when the paddy is fully ripe they all turn out, men and
●251 women, boys and girls, with knives and baskets and pluck the
415 ripe ears with a few inches of stalk; these are then carried home and put out to dry, after which they are thrown into an enormous sieve suspended from the roof of the house, and threshed by the action of the feet, the grains falling through on to a mat placed underneath on purpose to receive them. After thorough drying in the sun, they are put in tubs made of bark
[343] (*tibang*) and stowed away in the loft or else housed in a hut, built on purpose for them hard by the village, the posts of which are furnished with wooden discs immediately below the flooring to prevent the rats from entering. The Dyak method of pounding the paddy to free it from the husk by means of pestle and mortar is injurious to the grain. By it the hard outer skin which protects it from the weevil is broken and this insect soon takes advantage of the circumstance to attack and destroy it. In the husk or paddy state the rice can be kept for years without injury.

The Punans and Kajamans farm meagrely; they prefer the sago to rice and grow the palm.

2. *Habitations.*

361 A Sea Dyak village is a terrace upon posts varying in length according to the number of houses of which it is composed, and

5: Roth E-4 (no date) 1892 CC6 Iban OC6

out the smoke or to admit the fresh air. If the neighbours are near relations or intimate friends, as is often the case, a hole is cut in the wall which separates the room to avoid the necessity of a roundabout way into one anothers' apartments, and some villages are so arranged that one can traverse the entire length of the rear section of the building by means of these apertures without appearing on the verandah at all. There is no furniture in the room—none in fact being required. The floor is the occupiers' table and they squat to their meals. But there are plenty of mats to sit upon and baskets to pack their clothes in. Their cups and plates are hung in rows upon the walls as much for ornament as for use. Their valuables, such as old jars, gongs, etc., are ranged on three sides so as to present the most imposing appearance of wealth.

But the room is stuffy and untidy, and no wonder, seeing that there is but one for each family and this one is used as a kitchen as well as a mess room, as a nursery as well as a bed chamber. There can be no absolute privacy unless the door is barred to exclude the neighbours. Boys and girls keep running in and out and the dogs are always on the watch in the *tempuan* to spring in whenever the door swings open. The floor is swept after a fashion but the room is never deserted, and the roof is simply black with soot. The refuse is thrown into the piggery and poultry yard, which occupies the area or waste space under the house. Very little stench, if any, reaches the apartment from the ground, as the floor is raised too high above it to be affected by it. The *dapur* or fire-place is the only real piece of furniture in the room. It is built either to the right or to the left of the door set up against the wall of the *tempuan* and resembles an open cupboard, the lowest shelf resting upon the floor and the upper shelves being of lattice work instead of plank. The former is boarded all round and filled with clay. This is the fireplace and it is furnished with a few stones between which the pots are set. The shelf immediately above the fire is set apart for smoking fish and meat, etc. The shelves above this again are filled with firewood which being thoroughly dried is ready for use. The women, who do all the cooking, have also to keep these shelves supplied from the pile in the *tempuan*. As the smoke from the wood fire is not conducted to the roof by means of a chimney it spreads itself throughout the loft and blackens the beams and rafters until it finds its way out by the open window.[1]

[1] Elsewhere B. L. says: "They make a *palan* or raised platform and under it light a fire and heap it with dry twigs and fill the platform with split wood for drying as *bekal* (firewood). From the fire they take brands for other fires. They drive three pegs into the ground and place *prion* (jar) on top, fill

5: Roth E-4 (no date) 1892 CC6 Iban OC6

But the most valuable ornament in the ruai by far is of course the bunch of human heads which hangs over the fireplace like a bunch of fruit; these are the heads obtained on various warpaths by various members of the family, dead and living, and are handed down from father to son as the most precious heirlooms, more precious even than the ancient jars which they prize so highly. The next ornament of paramount importance is the bag of charms which is fastened to the centrepost and which is in like manner handed down from generation to generation and about which there is a great to do if any of the charms are lost or stolen.[1] Other posts are often adorned with trophies of the chase, horns and such like of deer and wild cattle and the heads of animals such as bears, monkeys, and crocodiles killed by the young boys. The empty sheaths of the swords and knives of the family are suspended on wooden hooks, while the naked blades are placed in racks above their heads.

The *tanju* or open-air platform is in front of the *ruai* and is railed at the edge, but the rail is often so slight that it is unsafe to lean against it. The flooring is usually of ironwood the better to stand exposure to the weather. It is used as a lounge in the evening, the view from it being extensive and the breeze refreshing. While the sun is shining the paddy is put out to dry as are the clothes and a variety of other things. The family whetstone and dye vat are kept here under the eaves of the roof.

The *sadau* or loft is used to stow away the baskets and agricultural instruments during the season they are not in use. The paddy is stowed away here in tubs of bark and also the seed for next year's farm.[2] Young women often sleep here and so do the young men and boys who are unprovided with curtains when the mosquitoes and sandflies are troublesome down below. They burn a fragrant bark to keep off the mosquitoes.

Whenever it is deemed expedient by the Sea Dyaks to shift from one locality to another, or to abandon an old habitation in favour of a new one, a general meeting is convened to consider the proposition and the desirability of the measure is fully discussed.[3] If a move be decided upon a few experienced men

[1] While on the Rejang river "a Kanowit gave me the tusk of a crocodile which devoured his sister, and showed me a boar's tusk which was lost to his family by an uncle who was killed by a Ukiet and to recover which he a few years ago killed the Ukiet. He showed me another tusk which was dropped by one of the boars which attacked and destroyed the house of an ancestor living at Lakut." Articles like these appear to constitute their charms.

[2] The Kyans, Kiñahs, and Lanahans stow their paddy in barns built for the purpose. The floor is six feet above the ground, and the posts are encircled with circular wooden discs to keep off the rats.

[3] The Kiñahs move away every few years so as to be always near heavy bush which they prefer for their farms.

5: Roth E-4 (no date) 1892 OC6 Iban OC6
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and less to the soil. The hunter usually proceeds on foot, accompanied by his dogs, which run on ahead and beat up the game, while he dawdles about gathering things on the way that may be useful to him. He knows when his beaters are on the scent by their peculiar clamorous bark, and he hurries up to spear the animal they have brought to bay. A Dyak village swarms with dogs, but few of them are fit for the labours of the chase, being for the most part curs that whine and howl and are of no use whatever, except to consume the refuse food and prowl about the premises. They are small in size and of a tawny colour. The breed is known to the scientific world by the specific name of *canis rutilans*. Some are striped with black, others are plain; they are called *saih* or *sabit*, according as they are one or the other. The former are the fiercer looking of the two. The best of them, that is to say, those employed in the chase, are plucky little animals and will worry a boar three or four times their size and not give in until cruelly mauled. Such dogs are worth their weight in dollars to those who are fond of boar and venison, and invaluable to those tribes who, like the Batakans, depend upon the hunting path for their food.

The quarry is carried on the back in a pack-basket suspended from the shoulders, and is cut up at home. If it is too heavy or too bulky to be transported in this fashion it is either cut up on the spot or dragged by the leg along the ground to the nearest watercourse and conveyed home in a canoe. The Dyaks infinitely prefer pork to venison, the former being the richer, fatter, and juicier of the two; indeed the venison of the country is coarse and devoid of fat. There is no waste in the preparation of animal food. The horns and tusks come in for a variety of uses, ornamental, superstitious, and economical. The larger bones are preserved to be hereafter fashioned into knife handles. The smaller bones are chopped up with the meat and fat to be afterwards salted or smoked as choice may dictate. All pickled food, *makasam*, is esteemed, and especially so pickled pork; pickled venison and pickled fish are devoured with immense satisfaction.

The Kiñahs preserve the skulls and jaws of the animals killed by their dogs in the chase, and of such as they offer in sacrifice; but they abandon them when they abandon the village, for it is not permitted by custom to take them away from one place to another.

Spring bows.—As the woods are full of pig and deer, the Dyaks resort to various contrivances to secure these denizens of the forest. Spring bows are set and pitfalls are dug in likely places for them to run against and tumble into. The *peti*, as

5: Roth E-4 (no date) 1892 OC6 Iban OC6

for ear pendants ; the helmet of the *galeatus* is used for a sword-buckle.

6. *Fishing.*

The Dyaks are expert anglers, and fishing is with them a favourite occupation. They commence fishing at a very early age, and the habit grows upon them rather than otherwise. They are fond of the water and both swim and dive well. They swim hand over hand like dogs. They never take a header in diving but jump into the water upright, sinking feet first.

Diving for Fish.—They often catch the fish in the upper waters by diving into the rocky pools and pulling them out of the holes and crevices. The *sema* especially are caught in this way.

Curing.—The women cure the fish. They either dry it in the smoke of a wood fire, or cut it up and boil it in brine and so preserve and pickle it, making *makasam ikan*.

Scoop net.—The scoop net is used chiefly by the women who are fond of wading up the shallows, net in hand and basket *suitong*, slung from the shoulder, scooping up the prawns and periwinkles, &c., that come in their way. Sometimes they drop the fish into a hollow gourd which they carry.

Casting net.—The *jala* or casting net in ordinary use is made of *tengang* string dyed claret colour, with *samak* to preserve it, and is weighted with stones if nothing better is to be obtained.

Angling.—They fully understand the use of a bait and invariably bait their hooks. Fish lines are made of the *apieng* palm.

The *Fish-spears* in use are the *penawan* and *serampang*; the penawan is simply a barbed spear with a slender iron fore-shaft; the serampang is a forked spear furnished with a long bamboo shaft, and with either two or three metal prongs.

The *Fish-traps* in every-day use are the *bubu* and *abau*. They are both of stiff basket work and resemble an acorn in shape; the only difference between them is that of size; the latter being infinitely the larger. The traps are made of the ribs of the apieng palm.

Fishing by torchlight.—Another mode of fishing is to creep along the bank in a canoe after dark with a torch in one hand and a fish spear in the other, to stick the mudfish as they rise to the surface confused by the light. Prawns are also caught in this fashion but with a hand net.

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6

forming a roof which keeps off the rain and sun, and lasts for three or four years.

The long Dyak village house is built in a straight line, and consists of a long uncovered veranda, which is called the *tanju*. The paddy is put on the *tanju* to be dried by the sun before it is pounded to get rid of its husk and convert it into rice. Here also the clothes and a variety of other things are hung out to dry. The family whet-stone and dye vat are kept under the eaves of the roof, and the men sharpen their tools and the women do their dyeing on the *tanju*. The flooring of this part of the house is generally made of *bilian*, or iron-wood, so as to stand exposure to the weather.

Next to the *tanju* comes the covered veranda, or *ruai*. This also stretches the whole length of the house, and the floor is made of bamboo, or *nibong* (a kind of palm), split into laths and tied down with rattan or cane.

This *ruai*, or public hall, is generally about twenty feet wide, and as it stretches the whole length of the house without any partition, it is a cool and pleasant place, and is much frequented by men and women for conversation and indoor pursuits. Here the women often do their work—the weaving of cloth or the plaiting of mats. Here, too, the men chop up the firewood, or even make boats, if not of too great a size. This long *ruai* is a public place open to all comers, and used as a road by travellers, who climb up the ladder at one end, walk through the whole length of the house, and go down the ladder at the other end. The floor is carpeted with thick and heavy mats, made of cane interlaced with narrow strips of beaten bark. Over these are spread other mats of finer texture for visitors to sit upon.

The length of this covered veranda depends upon the

15: Freeman E-5 (1949-1951) 1955 OC6 Iban OC6

PART 1

THE IBAN BILEK-FAMILY.

1. The most salient characteristic of Iban social organization is the practice of long-house domicile. Anyone who has travelled in the interior of Borneo is familiar with the conspicuous shape of a long-house: an attenuated structure supported on innumerable hard-wood posts, it stretches for a hundred yards or more along the terraced bank of a river, its roof—of thatch, or wooden shingles—forming an unbroken expanse. Superficially viewed the Iban long-house has the appearance of being a single structural unit, and many casual observers have made the facile inference that the long-house is therefore the outcome of some sort of communal or group organization and ownership.[1] For the Iban, at least, this inference is the very reverse of true. Among the various families which make up a long-house community there does exist a network of kinship ties, but the Iban long-house is primarily an aggregation of independently owned family apartments. The fact that these apartments are joined one to the other as to produce a long-house detracts little from their essential autonomy. Indeed the unbroken expanse of roof tends to conceal the fact that the Iban long-house is fundamentally a series of discrete entities—the independent family units of a competitive and egalitarian society.

2. A long-house, then, is made up of a series of independently owned family apartments which are joined longitudinally one to the other so as to produce a single attenuated structure. Long-houses do, however, vary very considerably in size: from houses of three or four family apartments and scarcely over a chain in length, to houses that sprawl for more than three hundred yards along the bank of a river and contain upwards of forty different family sections. But before discussing in detail the overall composition of the long-house, let us first turn to a brief examination of the distinct sections or apartments from which every long-house is constructed. Each of these apartments is owned and occupied by a particular family group, and these family groups are the basic corporate units of Iban society. The principal divisions of a family apartment are:

(*a*) the *bilek*, or living room,
(*b*) the *sadau*, or loft,
(*c*) the *ruai*, or roofed gallery,
(*d*) *tanju*, or open platform.

All of these are shown in Fig. 1.

The bilek.

3. Of these four parts the most important is the *bilek*, which is the family living room, and the place where the valued property of the family is stored. Each *bilek* is divided off from the *ruai* by a substantial wall of wooden planks, and side walls separate each *bilek* from the rooms on either side of it. Each *bilek* has one main entrance on to the *ruai*, with a hinged door of wooden slabs that is normally kept closed. At night it is usual for these doors to be barred from the inside. It is also fairly common for the side walls of a *bilek* to be broken by smaller doors or openings, so providing inter-communication between the family apartments of the long-house. But this practice is far from universal; internal doors or openings are only found if the neighbouring families are closely related (e.g. siblings or close cousins), or if they are on particularly friendly terms with one another. On several occasions I witnessed the blocking up of these internal openings following a dispute and quarrelling between neighbouring families. The *bilek* of a long-house always vary slightly in size, and the width of the wall facing on to the *ruai* is some indication of the economic status of the family that owns it. In Rumah Nyala, of the Sungai Sut, the smallest *bilek* was 12ft. 6ins. wide by 16ft. deep, while the largest was 23ft. wide by 17ft. 6ins. deep. The larger *bilek* of Rumah Tungku—a fifty door long-house of the Sungai Tiau—measured 25ft. wide by 24ft. deep.

4. The *bilek* is the normal location for cooking, eating, sleeping and a multitude of domestic tasks. Each *bilek* is equipped with its own cooking place, or *dapur*, which traditionally is situated at the front of the *bilek* against the dividing wall with the *ruai*. It consists of a rough scaffolding of wood which supports a raised hearth of packed clay, and some feet above, a wide rack on which fire wood is stacked ready for use. At this hearth the women boil rice—the staple food of the Iban—and prepare the relishes which accompany it. In the ordinary course of events, all the members of family—men, women, and children—eat together in their *bilek*, squatting in a circle around the meal which has been laid out in the centre of the room. At nights, finely plaited mats are spread, mosquito curtains suspended, and the *bilek* becomes the sleeping place of all but the young unmarried men, who more often favour the open gallery, or *ruai* of the long-house. At the back of the *bilek*, and frequently along both its sides, are stacked the huge jars (*tajau*) and bronze gongs (*tawak*) which constitute the main capital resources of a family, and its chief form of inheritable property. Kept carefully packed away in wooden trunks, or securely wrapped in bark-cloth are the hand-woven fabrics (*pua kumbo* and *kain kebat*), used only on ritual and gala occasions, which are another of the important indications of the wealth and status of an Iban family. Ranged in racks around the walls are plates and bowls, and an extraodinary medley of minor possessions.

The sadau.

5. Above each *bilek*, and jutting out over the *ruai*, is the *sadau*, which is a kind of garret or loft. Here, in immense bark bins, is stored the *padi* grown by the members of the *bilek*. A series of smaller containers hold the carefully selected seed (each family possesses many different types of *padi*), to be used at the next sowing. Most important of all these is the seed of the *padi pun*—

(1) Baring-Gould and Bampfylde, 1909, p. 27.

342 a singular variety of inherited rice—which is the centre of the elaborate fertility cult upon which
251 Iban agriculture is based. Also in the *sadau* are kept the various implements used in farming, and the mats, baskets and trays used when *padi* is being husked and winnowed.

The ruai.

342 6. The door of each family *bilek* opens on to another section known as the *ruai*, which is always of about the same area as the *bilek*, and which—like the *bilek*—is the private property of the family to which it belongs. In an Iban house of traditional design, the division between the *bilek* and the *ruai* is marked by the main supporting post (*tiang bumbong*) of the ridge-pole; thus the rear half of the ridged roof covers the *bilek* while the front half covers the *ruai*. Unlike the *bilek*, a family's *ruai* has no side walls, so that all these independently owned sections are joined to produce a continuous, roofed gallery, which runs the entire length of the long-house. Throughout its length the *ruai* maintains a fairly constant width. In Rumah Nyala, for example, the average width of the *ruai* was about 23ft., while in Rumah Tungku it was 25ft. The *ruai* serves many purposes. Three principal parts may be distinguished. Immediately adjacent to the wall dividing the *bilek* from the *ruai*, is a section about three to four feet in width, known as the *tempuan lesong*.
252 Here stands the *lesong*, a large wooden mortar, in which the women of the family pound their *padi* with long hard-wood poles, so to husk it. Most of these *padi* mortars are fitted with sounding boards which, vibrating in time to the pounding poles, send a lively, staccato rhythm reverberating through the surrounding hills. Here also, in the *tempuan lesong*, firewood is stacked, and fighting cocks are tethered.

342 7. Adjoining this narrow strip comes another section, usually about 10 to 12 feet in width, and completely unobstructed by posts or partitions; it thus forms a common corridor giving access to all parts of the long-house. It is, in fact, a kind of village street, and except on ritual occasions when a family may cordon off its own particular portion, it is used by all the members of the community as a kind of general thoroughfare. The flooring of this corridor section is usually made from bamboo slats, which are springy to the tread. The *ruai* also serves many other purposes in addition to those of a street. It is the site of many domestic occupations; it is here, for example, that women suspend the frames on which to process their cotton (*nyikat ubong*), and later, set up their weaving looms. When religious rituals (*gawai*) are held, the *ruai* is the place where the all-important shrines (*ranyai*) are erected, and it is also the pathway for ceremonial processions (*niti daun* and *ngerandong*), and the invocation of the gods (*timang*). Here too, the spirit mediums (*manang*) perform their principal rites, and here the bodies of the dead are laid during the period of public mourning and ritual wailing which precedes burial.

8. One side of this corridor or 'street' is flanked by the entrances to the various *bilek*, or family rooms, and on the other it is skirted by a series of open spaces which extend to a low wall right under the eaves of the long-house roof. Each family possesses one of these open rectangular spaces, known as *padong ruai*. Varying in width in accordance with the *bilek* of which it is an extension, but always having a regular depth—usually about eight to ten feet—the *padong ruai* is one of the most important parts of the long-house. Floored with adzed, wooden planks, and furnished with huge *rotan* mats, it is the place where the people of the house, and particularly the men, spend most of their leisure time. The various *padong ruai* of a long-house are the main centres of community life and social intercourse. Here meetings (*baum*) are held, and disputes formally heard and settled. Here guests are welcomed with tobacco and betel, and offerings to the gods preformed. The cool and convivial *ruai* is also the site for many minor tasks: the place where nets are knotted, knife handles and sheaths carved, mats plaited, and cotton tied ready for dyeing. At nights it is the place where the men gather in informal groups to talk about their [321] *padi* farms (a perennial topic of conversation), to discuss an omen or a dream, or merely to gossip, avidly and aimlessly. It is on the *ruai* too, and in the evenings, that the enthralling sagas (*ensera*) [538] of the Iban are chanted and recited—sagas which tell of the fantastic adventures and miraculous feats of their culture heroes, the Orang Panggau. By young and unmarried men, the *padong ruai* [373] is commonly used—despite the prowling dogs—as a sleeping place, and sometimes they construct for themselves, at the very edge of the *ruai*, and under the eaves of the roof, special bunk-like en- [178] closures, termed *agu*. The line between the corridor and the *padong ruai* is marked by a row of secondary supporting posts, which also stand at the edge of the projecting *sadau*, or loft. Close to these posts, and in tangled, smoke-blackened clusters, hang the highly prized heads, or *antu pala*, [354] with which so many of the most cherished values and beliefs of the Iban are associated. Beneath each such cluster of heads is a hearth (*bedilang*) of stone or clay, on which fires are kindled—both on chilly nights, and during certain head-hunting rituals. It is important to note that these heads (*antu pala*) are always the property of one particular family, and are never owned by the long-house group as a whole.

423 9. Like the *bilek*, of which it is an extension, each section of the *ruai* (composed of the three divisions just described) is owned by a particular family. It is the duty of each family to keep
342 its section of the corridor or long-house 'street' in good repair so that all may use it. But this general use involves no diminution of ownership rights; each family retains the right to cordon off its section of the *ruai* during the performance of certain rituals, and on other occasions to insist (on the pain of fine) that prohibitions governing its use be fully observed by all members of the long-house community. The boundaries of each family section of the *ruai* are clearly marked by the main supporting posts of the long-house structure, but quite often dwarf walls (12 to 18 inches in height) are erected on the *padong ruai*. These plank partitions, which make convenient back rests, further demarcate the various family sections.

The tanju.

342 10. Beyond the *ruai*, and so not covered by any form of roof, is the *tanju*, an open platform, usually about 20 to 25 feet wide. As with the corridor of the *ruai*, all the independently owned sections of the *tanju* are joined to form an unbroken, raised platform, which fronts the whole

243 the panicles, then flailing the heads over the boards of a specially
177 constructed container, they say that they dare not follow these techni-
178 ques which they consider coarse (kasar) for fear that they would offend
the semengat padi.

243 As the padi is threshed, it is spread on a bidai, a large mat
251 used especially for drying (kerekai) the padi on the family's tanju'.
285 The padi is poured onto the bidai and raked with a wooden-bladed rake to
a depth of about one inch. Lengths of bamboo or thin saplings up to
twelve feet long are extended from the windows opening onto the tanju'
so that hungary chickens can be driven away by a swing of the bamboo
or wood. Ideally, the padi will be dried for a full day to assure that
it will not turn moldy (bekuap) in storage. The first drops of a shower
send men and women alike scurrying to cover the padi or to bring it into
the house in case of a hard rain.

243 After the padi is dried, it is returned to the ruai and covered
by folding the corners of the bidai over it. On a hot and windless day,
the padi is winnowed. The bidai is opened and the padi transferred to a
series of baka', circular baskets made of plaited rattan averaging about
one bushel in capacity. The baka' full of padi are taken one by one to
the tanju' where the winnowing is done. The bearer tilts the baka'
slightly allowing a steady stream of padi to pour over the lip into the
[462] tikai senggang which have been spread to receive the padi. As one
person pours (berayar) the padi, one to three women fan (muput) winnowing-

243 trays (chapan) rapidly up and down, blowing the empty husks (ampa') away.
[462] As the padi collects on the tikai it is returned to the bidai to await the final storing.

The storing of the padi is done in the evening of the first full
243 251 moon (bulan kembong) after the harvest, and requires about three hours.
[221] The storage is an event of moment, for the sufficiency of the padi until the next harvest depends upon a proper storing. If the padi is handled carelessly or without respect, it will be offended and diminish far more rapidly than it should. If it is handled with reverence, it magically will increase in storage.

[554] The senior active woman in the bilik does the actual storing, receiving the padi as it is passed up from the bilik either in baka' or
[182] half coconut husks (tachu'). As in all major stages of the farm year, storage is observed with offerings (piring), consisting of the items already described. The woman in charge enlists the help of other men in the longhouse to aid in stamping the padi down into the tibang, to
[784] insure that it will not be wasted. The husband or male members of the bilik storing cannot be engaged in this because of the sexual relations obtaining between him and the woman in charge. The padi is poured into the tibang, which measures about five feet in diameter by three feet in depth, until the two or three owned by the family are filled, and surplus rice is stored in guni which may be stored alongside the tibang in the sadau, or lined up against the wall of the bilik.

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6
Sibu

342
729 periodic ritual smoking in remembrance of the heads.[12]
372

The ruai is an important area for ritual activities of the Ibans.
342 At the beginning of the horticultural year, the pandong (ritual center,
796 with ceremonial blanket enclosing the seed, whetstone, and utensils to be used) is erected on the ruai. The ruai is the path of the bards (lemanbang) to sebayan (the after-world), and it is the way of the gods into the long-house.

Between the ruai proper and the bilik is the tempuan lesong (mortar's
342 412 place), where rice mortars and mills are kept when not in use, hence the
235 name. Firewood is stacked against the dinding udok, and fighting cocks are tethered before the owner's bilik. The tempuan lesong may be demarcated
178 by another row of posts, but in some houses there is no such row. In the modern longhouse of Rumah Nyala, several bilik have long benches attached to the wall and the tempuan lesong has become the sitting area.

3. Sadau

Over each bilik and extending about halfway over the padong ruai
251 is a loft which serves a number of purposes. The most common use of the sadau is as a storage area, where the large bark-bins (tibang) containing the family's rice supply is stored. Mats, baskets, and farm utensils may be stored in the sadau. Some families use the sadau as a sleeping area,

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114 [12] Freeman is right to stress that "these heads (antu pala') are always the property of one particular family, and are never owned by the long-house group as a whole." (Ibid.).